



MINUTES
BARRIERS SUBGROUP
11/15/05
Gordon Persons Building
Montgomery

Attending: Carolyn Lapsley, Sharon Jay, Sandra Edwards, Tonita Phipps, Cindy Bratcher, Jimmy Thompson, Margaret Bonham, P.L. Corley, Kathy Casler, David Massey, Brenda Perry, Gayle Watts, Angela Robinson, Jay Pruett, Susan Ward, Linda Stephens

Meeting was opened and introductions made. Explanation given re: why meeting was being recorded, where to send questions and where to locate questions and answers, where to locate minutes of all continuum meetings on the web, and that the purpose of continuums is to obtain permanency for our children. Agenda listed several barriers that had been identified for discussion and floor was opened to discuss the listed barriers and any others that the group identified.

- Outside entities that can delay step-down – Suggestions were that the courts, educational representatives, and multi-needs participants be educated on the process of continuums and what is a “safe home”. Need to look at multi-needs policy. There was discussion about previous SDHR work with courts and education because this is not an issue that should be left only to the county DHR staff to accomplish. The question was also raised about whether there is a timeline to accomplish the education. Response was that SDHR has done some work with this group on permanency issues but there is not a timeline. It was suggested that there be:
 1. Regional lunch meetings with the Judges and that the attending Judges could help in reaching those who do not attend.
 2. Some counties have had success in reaching the education system through the counselors and that it would be good to get the superintendents involved. Suggested that we get on the schedule to meet with principals (in-service) and the meet with teachers at the schools in the fall. Also suggested that educators at all levels be participants on local QA teams.
 3. It was also suggested that we partner with the local Children’s Policy Council’s on this issue.



- Outcome Measures – The issue of looking at quality, not just quantity was addressed and the fact that credit for good work needs to be built into the measures. It was mentioned that we currently are developing a measure form and a small group is reviewing the draft form. Jay Pruett was asked to talk about outcome measures. He pointed out that the ultimate measure is whether a child goes home but that outcome measures related to school, emotional stability, management of illness, and involvement with law enforcement should also be developed. A TFC provider concern was mentioned. The concern is that there is a substantial number of children who do not have a goal to return home and if the ultimate measure is to return home then the providers will not be seen as successful. Exploring adoption for these children was mentioned as an alternative to going home. Adoption for older children was not seen as a realistic goal. Discussion about possibilities for adoption and independent living was held and also that providers will have the opportunity to partner with providers who locate adoptive resources (if they do not choose to be licensed as a provider which develops adoptive resources).

Another issue around outcome measures was that SDHR will collect information from providers which may result in unreliable data collection and comparisons that are faulty.

Suggestions are:

1. Establish a subgroup to define measurements for continuums, what the measures will be, and who will be accountable for the measures. The data to be collected will consider information from the provider, county DHR, state DHR, and reporting requirements to Federal.
 2. Measures should be used to identify pockets of best practice and ways in which the best practices can address areas where improvement is needed.
- County/Provider Difference of Opinion – Concern was expressed about being held to an expectation that children be stepped down when the provider has no control over the ISP process. It was acknowledged that DHR hold ultimate responsibility for the child and the ISP should control the process. Youth Villages pointed out that they have been successful in working with different levels within DHR to resolve conflicts & build strong ties. Madison County pointed out that it is necessary to involve



line staff, particularly around the issue of who is and who is not referred. Line staff must also be aware of continuums, appropriate goals, and when a child should step down. It was recognized that line staff need to be part of the decision making process during development of continuums.

It was recognized that some staff will not want to reunify and when that happens, the provider should go up through the system to get a ruling on action to be taken. The group was advised that a conflict resolution process will be built in to the process.

A need for a “level playing field” was mentioned – the same expectations and measures across the state. The need for a more clear definition of the role of statewide consultants (as well as empowerment of same) was discussed so that practice in the state would be more equal.

Suggestions were:

1. Include line staff in development process
 2. Train line staff in continuums and permanency
 3. Be prepared for a learning curve and expect changes – be flexible where possible
- Availability of Traditional Foster Homes – Discussion revolved around whether licensed homes can be shared between the provider and the county DHR. The difficulty is with the licensing and liability that the provider faces. If the entity that licenses the home loses control of the home, is the licensing entity still responsible? This was recognized as an issue but one that would have to be resolved in order to reduce the number of moves for a child. Suggestion was that children be referred to continuum for traditional foster care. There are fiscal issues around this in that the payment to a provider is expected to be greater than that needed for traditional foster care. This is an issue that will need to be addressed by the Collaboration Subgroup.
Suggestion:
 1. Have a subgroup to discuss this issue (we expect that the Collaboration group will discuss).
 - “Gear-up” Time – Discussed whether providers anticipate barriers to development of program in the time allowed between selection and implementation. Concerns around organization were expressed and the appearance that everyone wants everything. Suggested answer was:



1. Make timelines and expectations a part of the RFP process
2. Look at current capacity need and who can meet those needs
3. Be aware that approximately 50 homes will be needed to operate economically
4. Develop a subgroup on contractual issues